

Lack of tele-density in rural India

***132. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite rapid advancements made on the Mobile (Cellular) telephone network mostly serving the urban elite, the tele-density of rural India still remains at 20 per cent;

(b) whether only rural telephony based on landline connections could serve the basic requirements of schools, health centres and panchayat offices in rural areas;

(c) how many new rural connections Government propose to provide in the coming year under the Universal Service Obligation fund and whether Government expect the rural tele-density to reach 25 per cent by 2010?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) As on 30.09.2006, the teledensity in rural areas is 1.84% as against teledensity of 47.85% in urban areas of the country. However, this figure includes only fixed line phones in rural areas and does not include mobile phones in rural areas.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is providing support for Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in commercially unviable areas. So far 11.13 lakh DELs have been provided under this scheme and another 6.5 lakh are expected to be provided by March, 2007. Further, Government is in the process of taking necessary action to provide support for provision of infrastructure for mobile services in rural and remote areas of the country. A draft tender document for setting up and managing infrastructure sites and provision of mobile services in rural and remote areas of the country has been placed on the Department of Telecommunications website www.dot.gov.in on 21.11.2006 for inviting comments/suggestions from stakeholders.

As per targets fixed in New Telecom Policy, 1999 (NTP-99), Rural Teledensity of 4% was envisaged by 2010. This target is likely to be achieved much ahead of schedule. Government not restricting itself to

above target, is also making efforts to provide one telephone connection per three households and one connection per two households in rural areas by 2007 and 2010 respectively.

Conversion of Telephone Exchanges into Electronic Exchanges

*133. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of telephone exchanges proposed to be converted into electronic exchanges in the country, State-wise; and

(b) the details of financial allocation made by Government during the current year in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) All the exchanges working in the Telecom Network of the country are already converted to electronic exchanges.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Facilities for BPL people in cities

†*134. DR. PRABHA THAKUR:
SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL:

Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the number of people living below poverty line in small, big and metropolitan cities of the country, State-wise;

(b) whether Government have taken any steps to improve the living standard of these poor people as well as to provide jobs and the facility of housing to them; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.